**Extension: The French Revolution**

**Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: The Role of Women in the French Revolution**  
*Elizabeth Monroe: Law, Politics and Govt*

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| **Introduction:**  James Monroe was appointed as the minister to France in 1794. This was during the height of the French Revolution. During his voyage to France the Thermidorian Reaction occurred, placing the French government in total chaos, and overthrowing Robespierre. Although the Reign of Terror was essentially over, the guillotine was still being used to execute political prisoners.   Among these prisoners was Adrienne de Noiolles de Lafayette, the imprisoned wife of the Marquis de Lafayette, the great personal friend of George Washington and many other revolutionary era patriots and France's most prominent supporter of American independence. The wife of the Marquis was due to be executed when Elizabeth Monroe visited her in prison. Elizabeth Monroe had recognized the importance of social behavior in France and come to be known by the French as “La Belle Americane” which meant the beautiful American. This visit to the French prison caused the French to release the wife of the Marquis and her children because the unstable French government wanted to maintain their alliance with the United States.   This is an example of the effect of a woman on the French Revolution. Although women my not have had direct political involvement in the French Revolution they did have a significant effect. [[1]](#footnote-1)  **Assignment:**   1. Research specific women of the French Revolution such as; Marie Antoinette, Marie-Jean Caritat, Marie Gouze, Etta Palm d'Aelders, Charlotte Corday, Louis-Marie Prudhomme, or Olympe de Gouges. Describe the contributions made by these women and explain how their efforts further promoted women’s rights. 2. Research specific women who made lasting contributions to American history. This list is quite extensive, so I will not provide you with examples. Describe how these women impacted history and helped bring about a change in how we view gender equality. 3. Compare the contributions of those women selected in your research. 4. Conclude with an explanation of how the roles of women have changed over the course of history. |

1. *Elizabeth Monroe: Law, Politics and Govt.* National First Ladies’ Library. “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity: The Role of Women in the French Revolution.” http://www.firstladies.org/curriculum/curriculum.aspx?Curriculum=1018. (Accessed 14 January 2014). [↑](#footnote-ref-1)